

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 SSM-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 SSO-00 NEAE-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 /067 W
-----082740 201657Z /64

O 201545Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6563
INFO AMEMJASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEPASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USIA WASHDC

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 0459

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: SOPN, SY, US, EG, IS
SUBJ: SYRIA CONTINUES CONTRADICTIONARY INTERPRETATION OF REASONS
BEHIND SUSPENSION OF JERUSALEM TALKS

1. SYRIA PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND MEDIA CONTINUE TO
OSCILLATE BETWEEN CALLING SADAT'S MOVE A US-DIRECTED GAME PLANNED
TO RESTORE HIS CREDIBILITY AND VIEWING IT AS THE LOGICAL CONCLUSION
OF HIS INITIATIVE.

2. MOST AUTHORITATIVE PUBLIC STATEMENT TO DATE IS SPEECH
GIVEN AT RALLY THE DAMASCUS BRANCH OF THE BAATH PARTY STAGED
JAN 19 AT WHICH REGIONAL COMMAND MEMBER YOUSIF AL-AS'AD DECLARED:
"THE SADAT REGIME IS BENT ON BETRAYING THE ARAB NATION AND
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GOING THROUGH WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AMERICAN-
ZIONIST PLOT TO ITS END...THE ZIONISTS AND THEIR AMERICAN
ALLIES ARE COMING UP WITH A NEW SHOW EVERYDAY: COMMITTEES
IN CAIRO PRESIDED OVER BY A ZIONIST; COMMITTEES IN OCCUPIED
JERUSALEM PRESIDED OVER BY AN EGYPTIAN; AND SADAT CALLING
FOR A CONFERENCE IN CAIRO SO THAT THE ZIONISTS CAN COME TO
CAIRO. IN SPITE OF ALL THESE PRE-ARRANGED SHOWS, THE ZIONISTS

HAVE GIVEN NOTHING BUT HUMILIATION TO ANWAR."

3. AL-BAATH EDITORIAL OF JAN 20 ENTITLED "AGREEMENT TO DISAGREE" PEMINLAR TO PREVIOUS DAY'S DISCOURSE IN PRONOUNCING THE LATEST DEVELOPMENT A "GAME". US IS DEPICTED AS ORCHESTRATING DEVELOPMENTS. COLUMNIST INTERPRETED SADAT'S DECISION AS COMING AS A RESULT OF HIS NEED TO IMPROVE HIS IMAGE IN THE FACE OF "MOUNTING ARAB REJECTION" HE FURTHER PREDICTED THAT US WILL START APPLYING PRESSURE ON BEGIN WHO IS PLAYING HIS ROLE OF BEING MORE "HARDLINE THAN IS REASONABLE," HOWEVER, A CERTAIN DOUBT THAT THIS IS TRUE IS INTRODUCED WHEN THE COLUMNIST ASKS RHETORICALLY WHY ELSE WOULD ISRAEL TAKE SUCH A HARDLINE POSITION "WHEN IS WOULD BE UNTHINKABLE FOR IT TO MISS IT (THIS GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY) BECAUSE OF BIGIN'S EXCESSIVE HARDLINE POSTURE."

4. TISHRIIN COLUMNIST JIBRAN KURIYYA IS MORE RESERVED IN HIS ANALYSIS. HE SAID THAT SADAT IS MASTAKEN IF HE THINKS HE IS CAPABLE OF IMPROVING HIS IMAGE THROUGH THIS "NEW PLOY." HE CLAIMED SADAT'S GOAL WAS TO GET THE ISRAELI LEADERS TO TAKE POSITIONS WHICH COULD BE PUBLICIZED AS "CONCESSIONS" BUT SAID IT IS APPARENT TO ALL THAT SADAT IS DOING THIS IN THE CONTEXT OF US TUTELAGE. HE SEEMED TO HOLD OUT A GLIMMER OF HOPE FOR SADAT'S "REDEMPTION" BY ASSERTING THAT, "UNLESS THE WEAK BASES OF THIS POLICY (SADAT'S) ARE ELIMINATED, THERE CAN BE NO TALK OF CHANGE IN CAIRO'S POLICY OR ABOUT A POLICY EMBODYING THE ASPIRATIONS OF STEADFASTNESS UNCLASSIFIED

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AND RESISTANCE OF THE ARAB MASSES." HE CONCLUDED BY CLAIMING THAT ALL THE PRESSURE SO FAR HAD BEEN ON EGYPT AND THAT HOW COULD SADAT EXPECT IT TO BE OTHERWISE WHEN THE US ITSELF DOES NOT ACKNOWLEDGE THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIANS TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A STATE IN THEIR HOMELAND.

5. THAWRA EDITORIAL, HOWEVER, IS QUITE DIFFERENT IN ITS INTERPRETATION FORM THE FOREGOING. IT SAW SADAT AS HAVING BEEN "DECEIVED" BY THE ISRAELIS FOR THE LAST TWO MONTHS AND CONSIDERED HIS DECISION TO SUSPEND THE TALKS AS A SELF-CONDEMNATION OF HIS VISIT TO JERUSALEM. COLUMNIST ALLUDED TO POSSIBLITY THAT THIS MAY WELL BE A GAME, BUT THEN CONCLUDED THAT THE LAST TWO MONTHS OF SADAT'S EFFORTS HAVE ONLY OBSTRUCTED PEACE EFFORTS "WHICH COULD HAVE STARTED IN GENEVA."

MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, PEACE TALKS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978DAMASC00459
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780031-0191
Format: TEL
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780141/aaaabirm.tel
Line Count: 111
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d525c7e1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3742819
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SYRIA CONTINUES CONTRADICTIONARY INTERPRETATION OF REASONS BEHIND SUSPENSION OF JERUSALEM TALKS
TAGS: SOPN, PGOV, PDEV, SY, US, EG, IS, XF
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d525c7e1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014